

Module 1 Reading 1

Profiles of the gifted and talented

George Betts and Maureen Neihert (1998) vol. 32, no. 2, Spring
pp.249-253

Concept

Betts and Neihert theorised six profiles of gifted and talented children and youth to provide insights for facilitating growth, of a gifted and talented child.

Gifted children are traditionally differentiated by intellectual abilities or an area of interest and achievement.

These profiles raise awareness among educators and parents that the observation of feelings, behaviors and needs of the gifted and talented are valid and significant in differentiating gifted children and importantly identifying students as gifted.

Life experiences and genetics greatly affect personality and the fruition of giftedness. To observe children in a variety of settings, demonstrates the point that 'Gifted' children cannot be identified by the same set of criteria. (Summary Strang 1965)

Roeper (1982) proposed five types of gifted children based on how children coped with emotions.

- Perfectionist
- Child/adult
- The winner of the competition
- The self critic
- The well integrated child

She focused on coping styles and ways in which the children experienced and expressed feelings.

A child is a total entity: emotional, intellectual and physical development must be considered equally. "Giftedness should be examined as a construct that impacts on personality."
(Roeper1982, p.21).

Children can be defined by several of the categories below and may move between categories before possibly settling into one or two of the areas as they age.

Type 1 – Successful

- 90% of identified students in schools.
- Have learned to the system, who to please and how.
- Do well in tests and institutionalised in their thinking.
- Can fail outside school where they are not 'spoonfed' and not adaptable to change.

Type 2 –The Challenging

- Often schools fail to identify (unless well trained in G & T).
- Non- conforming, challenge the system, teachers, parents – conflict.
- Very creative, but low self- esteem.
- Noted that students who drop out of school (type 4) often displayed type 2 characteristics in junior school.

Type 3- The Underground

- Usually middle school girls and later in high school for boys.
- Deny their talent to fit in with 'non-gifted' peers.
- Often insecure and anxious
- Parents and teachers expect more of them -they rebel more.
- Alternatives need to be found to meet their academic needs.

Type 4 – The Dropouts

- Mainly high school students who are angry at the system for not recognising their talents and meeting their needs.
- Usually interests lie outside the school curriculum.
- Identified late

- Low self esteem
- Not able to achieve within traditional system.
- Require 1:1 working relationship with adult.

Type 5- The Double Labelled

- Physically or emotionally handicapped in some way or learning disabilities.
- Not catered for in most gifted programmes.
- Deny any difficulties by saying activities are boring/stupid.
- Put others down to make themselves feel better.
- Usually perceived as average or referred to for remedial assistance.
- School system focuses on their failures not strengths.

Type 6- The Autonomous Learner

- Strive to use the system to their advantage and direct it in areas that interest them.
- Make the system work for them.
- High self esteem.
- Usually in leadership roles, well respected by peers and adults.
- Independent and self directed.
- Risk takers.
- Can express themselves confidently and clearly.

Looking at these profiles it is easy to see which students could easily be excluded from identification and why. The institution of education, due to the nature of its structure, physical buildings, economics, class sizes, curriculum, teaching and testing styles and so on, expect conformity on many levels.

These expectations cannot be easily, met if at all, by students from types 1 – 5. Hence many “gifted” students can be overlooked, as their social, emotional issues dominate their interactions and performance at school.

Using these profiles is a good way to open doors to students whose non- conforming behaviours would have previously blocked any possibility of gifts/ talents being identified.

I believe that all of these methods are useful in keeping an open mind to how giftedness can be disguised through emotions, behaviour and academic achievement. They can encourage an open mind that will allow further exploration and possible identification.

Module 1 Reading 2

A differentiated model of giftedness and talent

Francoys Gagne

Gagne's proposes the difference between Gifted and Talented, by providing definitions of the two concepts.

Natural ability versus learned ability.

Giftedness

- Untrained
- Genetic
- Spontaneous
- Superior natural abilities in at least one area/ domain.
- Fast and easy learning process.
- Among the top 10% of his/her age peers

Four aptitude domains;

1. Intellectual (IG)
2. Creativity (CG)
3. Socioaffective (SG)
4. Sensorimotor (MG)

Can be observed more easily in younger children, as environmental influences and systematic learning has had a limited impact at such an age.

Talent

- Superior mastery of systematically developed skills and knowledge in at least one area/domain that places the individual in upper 10% of age peers who are or have been active in that field.
- Gradually emerge from "high aptitudes" into well- trained developed skills.
- A given natural ability can express itself in many ways.ie; manual dexterity can be modelled into a pianist, painter.

Gagne suggests that giftedness enables talent to be developed at a faster and higher level than that of age peers.

Developmental (LP)

Natural ability is the raw material; can't be talented without being gifted. Can be gifted and not talented (as talent may never be realised due to catalysts such as The Environment and Personality)

What leads to the development of a gift into a talent or not is dependent upon;

Chance (CH)- growing up with a particular family, type of school attended, and opportunities to develop skills.

Intrapersonal Catalysts (IC) -

Hereditary dispositions to behave in certain ways - such as traits/personality.

Psychological, physical factors, motivation, will power and effort. Self management- concentration, work habits, initiative, organisation. These all can have positive and negative impact on talents being developed.

Environmental (EC)

All factors from the environment can affect outcomes.

Parent, teachers, peers, siblings, access to programmes, culture, and so on. Can limit or support opportunities.

Students must be in the top 90th percentile to be considered gifted. The top 10% are then recognised within 4 levels of giftedness, by which Gagne suggests should influence the type of programme implemented within schools.

Moderately

Highly

Exceptionally

Extremely

As with Betts and Neihart, Gagne recognises that there are many factors that influence giftedness and its development into a talent and that programmes need to be tailored to the students, not one size fits all. However Gagne seems to focus on defining giftedness and talent and differentiating them, as opposed to Betts and Neihart who focus on how giftedness impacts on personality development and behaviour and how to identify giftedness in students.

Module 1 Reading 3

- Due to the conceptions of gifted and talented.
- Curriculum and
- Testing methods

A lot of students from minority groups can miss being identified as gifted and not get the type of educational provision they need to realise their potential.

- Cultural minority groups in Australia and America highly represented in special education programmes, not gifted and talent.
- 1910 French man Binet developed test for identifying learning difficulties.
- 1920's Terman used his testing of intelligence to identify giftedness.
- Stanford-Binet test used widely throughout schools based on high IQ 140+
- Reason for limited identification of a variety of giftedness.
- Sociocultural and socioeconomic factors should also affect definition.